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Professor Moore defended the early date of the Song of Deborah and its historical character in opposition to the mythical or other theories.

Professor Paton's paper on "The use of the word *Kōhēn* in the Old Testament" aimed to show that the apparent contradictions in the statements of the Old Testament regarding the priesthood do not lead necessarily to the conclusion of the school of Graf that there was a radical development in the priestly *cultus*; but that all these statements are consistent and clear on the hypothesis of a development in the use of the word *Kōhēn* itself, which (he claimed) denoted first either a sacred or secular office and was gradually narrowed and specialized in meaning. The paper was ably written and led to one of the most active discussions of the session. Rev. B. W. Bacon argued that such a development in the word was inconceivable without a parallel development in the *cultus*.

The next meeting of the Society will be in May at New Haven.

THE EXPEDITION OF THE BABYLONIAN EXPLORATION FUND.

EXCAVATIONS AT NIFFER DURING THE SEASON OF 1889.

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II.

Notwithstanding all delays, difficulties, misunderstandings, etc., I would regard the results of the first year as quite successful. A great amount of good pioneer-work was accomplished. I can not go into the details of the collections purchased in London and Baghdad. These collections—the J. S., Kh. and H.,—have been described at some length in different numbers of *HEBRAICA*. In these were found the Abēsu tablets belonging to the Hammurabi dynasty. Professor Sayce, in a long introduction on the Hammurabi dynasty (*Records of the Past*, New Series, Vol. III.), among other things, says: "Contemporaneous documents lately discovered at Niffer prove that the true name of Ebisum, who is made the eighth king of the first dynasty, was really Abesukh." These tablets were not found at Niffer. Compare *HEBRAICA*, October, 1889, where, in commenting on the Kh. collection, which was purchased in London, I said: "One of the most interesting things connected with these collections was the discovery of a king hitherto unknown. The reading of the name puzzled me for a long time. It was read in two or three different ways by two or three different Assyriologists, to whom I had shown these names. At last, on J. S., 41—a collection of antiquities also purchased in London from Joseph Shemtob—with the aid of Mr. Pinches, I read A-bi-e-shu-'. On J. S., Nos. 42 and 43, the name is written quite plainly in the same

way." Cf. also J. S. 142, an archaic contract from the same king. In the Kh. collection, cf. Nos. 19 and 198. In the H. collection, there are three or four tablets belonging to this king. In August, 1889, Mr. Joseph Shemtov, an Arab dealer in antiquities in London, had two more of these Abêsu tablets in his possession. In a letter to Dr. Carl Bezold, published in his *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, April, 1889, the identification of Ebisum with Abêsu was established. My letter was written from Niffer, and hence Prof. Sayce's mistake in crediting these tablets to the finds at Niffer. During the first season's excavations at Niffer, no tablets belonging to this king were found. Mr. Pinches has, however, found a tablet of Ammi-Satana in one of the British Museum collections, on which he calls himself the son of Abêsu. The text of this tablet will be produced in HEBRAICA. Mr. Pinches also informed me that there are two Abêsu tablets in the collection brought back by Mr. Budge in 1889. There is also the celebrated astronomical tablet, which is used by Epping and Strassmaier in their *Astronomisches aus Babylon*, the large cylinder of Nebuchadnezzar, Hammurabi cones, etc., etc. These collections, as well as the finds at Niffer during the first year, are very full of tablets belonging to the Hammurabi period. Perhaps the most important tablets unearthed at Niffer are the two contracts dated in the second and fourth years of Ašûritililâni. For a full description of these tablets, see my note in the London *Academy*, April 30, 1889; Prof. Hilprecht in Bezold's *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, Vol. iv., No. 2, and my note in HEBRAICA, Vol. vii., No. 1, from which the following account is taken:

"Among many other important tablets which were excavated during the stay of the *Expedition of the Babylonian Exploration Fund* at Niffer, in 1889, were three contract tablets belonging to the reign of Ašûritililâni. For the sake of convenience, I will call these tablets 1, 2 and 3. No. 1 was found on the 14th of February, and it was on the 28th of the same month that Professor Hilprecht read the date as Nippûru arĥu Šabâtu ūmu 20. m. ilu Ašûr-êtil-ilu (*sic*) šar mâtu Aš-[šur-Ki]. It is, perhaps, the half of a large reddish-gray tablet, the obverse side being badly mutilated, the reverse, on the other hand, being very well preserved. The name of the king is not so clear, as one would judge from Prof. Hilprecht's remarks in *ZA.*, IV., 2. He himself queries his own reading. If the name is to be read Ašûritilili, this brings nothing new, since it is so written on his brick published in *I. R.*, p. 8. This tablet has passed into the hands of the Turkish government, and hence we may never expect to see it again.

"Of much greater importance are Nos. 2 and 3, both of which were excavated on March 4th, and were identified by me on the following day, after they had been cleaned, as belonging to Ašûritililâni, cf. the *Academy*, April 30, 1889, and *ZA.*, IV., 2. Both of these tablets were handed over to the government, but were later on presented to me by my friend Bedri-Bey, the Turkish Commissioner to the Expedition. I have in turn presented them to the University of Pennsylvania.

"No. 2 is a small blackish-gray contract, or rather loan tablet, $4.3 \times 3.1 \times 1.2$ cms. in size. It is almost perfectly preserved. A small piece was broken off, however, while it was being handled by the officers in the custom house at Scanderûn. The following is a brief summary of the contents of this tablet, viz.: Adar-aḫê-erêb has loaned eight shekels of silver to a man—about whose name there is some doubt. From the first day of Araḫsamna it is to bear interest at the rate of one-half shekel. A list of four witnesses follows, and then, what is of most importance to us, the date, viz.: Nippûru araḫ Araḫsamna umû 1 šattu 4 Ašûritililâni šar mâtu A-šûr-Ki. In my note to the *Academy*, I read the date of the year as 6. I was, perhaps, a little too enthusiastic at the time about my find, and hence was inclined to make the date as large as possible. It can be read 6, but it is better to regard the two lower wedges as prolongations of upper wedges, and to make the number 4.

"No. 3 is a grayish-brown loan tablet, $5.1 \times 3.8 \times 1.2$ cms. in size. It is badly broken, and the names of the parties concerned in the contract are not legible. The date reads: Nippûru araḫ Addaru—day lost—šattu 2 Ašûritililâni šar mâtu Aššûr. This tablet also was somewhat damaged by the rough handling of the Turkish custom officers.

"The value of these tablets is from a chronological and historical standpoint. They make it necessary for Assyriologists to change their views in regard to the date of the separation of the Babylonian from the Assyrian empire, cf. *Academy* and *ZA.*, as cited above."

In addition to these, we found a brick stamp of Naram-Sin, a fine contract of Evil-Merodach, and numerous tablets of the Persian period.

For a more technical description of the work of the Expedition, I would refer to Prof. Peters' article in the *P. A. O. S.* I have given a fuller account of our life in camp. I have, however, been very careful to follow the lines of Prof. Peters' article, and not to add anything, but rather to elaborate in a few instances. A full account of the Expedition, prepared by Prof. Peters, with the coöperation of the other members of the staff, should be published at once. It is not necessary to wait until all the tablets purchased and excavated can be edited.